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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
APPLICANT REVIEW PANEL

PUBLIC MEETING

555 CAPITOL MALL, 5TH FLOOR
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2010

9:30 A.M.

Reported by:

Kathryn Swank, CSR, RPR

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APPEARANCES

PANEL MEMBERS:

Kerri Spano, Chairperson
Nasir Ahmadi
Mary Camacho

STAFF:

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Counsel
Diane Hamel, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT:

Robert Austin
Steven A. Berneberg
Margaret Edson-Smith
Joan Matthews
Luisa Menchaca
Elizabeth Pataki

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| 1. Approval of Minutes from April 19, 2010 | 4 |
| 2. The Panel will discuss the applicant review and selection process, update the public on each panelist's progress and, if necessary, adjust the anticipated timeline for applicant review and selection. | 5 |
| 3. Based on the Voters FIRST Act, the implementing regulations, and their training, the panel will discuss those qualities and characteristics each panel member would like to see in an ideal commissioner and, without discussing particular applicants by name, discuss their assessment of some of the applicant qualities and characteristics panelists have encountered in the applications they have reviewed. | 12 |
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PROCEEDINGS

CHAIRPERSON SPANO: The hour being around 9:30
and a quorum being present, I want to call to order the
April 30th, 2010, Applicant Review Panel meeting.

Secretary, please call the roll.

MS. HAMEL: Mr. Ahmadi?

PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Here.

MS. HAMEL: Ms. Camacho?

PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Here.

MS. HAMEL: Ms. Spano?

CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Here.

The first item on the agenda is to move the
minutes from April 19th. Copies of the draft minutes
are available at the back of the room.

Has each member of the panel had the opportunity
to read the draft minutes?

PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Yes, I have.

PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I have also.

CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Okay. I have reviewed them
also and I believe they reflect accurately the
discussion that took place and decisions made on
April 19th.

Is there any comment from the public for the
discussion of the minutes?

Seeing that there is no public comment, I move to

1 adopt that the -- as final, the draft minutes of April
2 19th meeting as written.

3 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I second.

4 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: All opposed? I mean, all in
5 favor?

6 (Ayes)

7 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: All opposed?

8 There being no opposition, the motion is carried.

9 The second item of business on our agenda today
10 is a discussion of the timeline and selection process.
11 Can everybody hear me okay? Okay.

12 I'm not sure how much we have to add at this
13 point, but I do have a few thoughts. It appears that
14 we're hovering around 4,400 completed applications that
15 are uploaded right now on the website. There could be
16 potential for more, up to over 4,800, so we have quite a
17 response right now that we're trying to review.

18 I think we're working very, very diligently, day
19 and night, trying to review these applications. And so
20 to do a meaningful review takes a lot of time. And I
21 have been reviewing more applications than I can count.
22 There are many applicants that are qualified, so it
23 makes reviewing this quite a challenge.

24 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I agree.

25 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Therefore, you know, I

1 think -- I know that our goal was to identify the 300 to
2 500 most qualified applicants and to reduce the pool --
3 this pool by the end of May. And it might have been a
4 little ambitious. We have quite a number to review, and
5 to do a substantial review at this point, to assess the
6 core qualifications of these candidates, may require a
7 little bit more time and it may carry over, I think, in
8 my opinion, through June.

9 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: You mean the first week of
10 June?

11 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Maybe. Maybe the middle.

12 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I hope not beyond that.

13 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: No. I don't think it would.
14 We have BSA staff assigned to us, each member of the
15 panel. We have our own little team of people that will
16 be trained on reviewing these applications also, putting
17 in a lot of overtime. You know, I'm -- as I looked at
18 the initial application myself, I felt like, you know,
19 there are three -- the three core responses from the
20 applicants for the essay responses to refer to the core
21 criteria that are set in the law. But I'm also
22 considering any of the other responses that the
23 applicants can provide in the other areas, like in
24 response to questions 1, 5, and 6. So there's possibly
25 six areas on an application that I need to, at least,

1 look at in order to get a fair understanding of what the
2 characteristics and qualifications of the applicant.
3 Because as stated in the webinar, the applicants were
4 informed that they could write in these areas that could
5 apply to those other three qualifications. So I feel
6 it's like my obligation to look at that. So that all
7 takes place. Some people have a lot to say and they
8 have a lot to offer as an applicant, as a commissioner,
9 potential commissioner.

10 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I also agree with what
11 Kerri says, is, there is many qualified applicants out
12 there and I agree that, you know, having a May date may
13 be ambitious. We're hoping for it. However, it may go
14 into June where we're able to look at them, because I
15 know when I'm sitting there crunching my numbers I'm
16 thinking, oh, my gosh, are we going to be able to do
17 this?

18 And I know that BSA staff has assigned us staff
19 and when they have assigned us staff, it's each
20 individual ARP member has unique staff members. They
21 are unable to take to any of the other staff, so they
22 are aware of the Bagley-Keene requirements and they are
23 abiding by those also.

24 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: And one comment that I want
25 to add is that, even though we have a lot of

1 applications and it's challenging and demanding in terms
2 of how much time it takes to review each one of them and
3 compare to the other ones and make a decision, we will
4 meet our deadline to have the 60 of the most qualified
5 applicants list by October 1st. That's our goal. And
6 also I do think we are still thinking that the
7 interviews will take place in August and maybe the first
8 half of September.

9 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yeah. I have to agree
10 with you on the interviews, because those have to take
11 place at that time. So those are kind of a -- I think a
12 timeline that it's pretty much stationary, I'm feeling,
13 to make sure that we can -- we can ensure that we meet
14 that deadline.

15 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I want to reinforce that the
16 staff that we have assigned to help us, they are only
17 making recommendations for us. It's the panel's
18 responsibility and our obligation to ultimately decide
19 on who we feel is the most qualified candidate. So I
20 just want to make that clear, that they are not
21 deciding. We are. They are assisting us in our
22 determination of that decision, but they are strictly
23 just making recommendations.

24 And I think as we get further along in this
25 process and as we whittle down the pool, we're going to

1 decide more firmly on, you know, our goal is the
2 August -- August to conduct the interviews. So as that
3 date approaches, I believe that, you know, we're going
4 to have to firm up how we're going to do it, how many
5 we're going to do, and all that. We have a statutory
6 date of August 1st to provide those names to the
7 legislators. So we will meet that date. I am
8 confident. I'll be exhausted by then, but I believe
9 that we will make that date.

10 So as we progress along, we will know a little
11 bit more about what we're experiencing, what we're
12 reviewing in terms of the qualifications and candidates,
13 but we're going to be -- as it gets down to the 120 that
14 we're going to interview, it's -- those are tough
15 decisions that we're going to have to make and we're
16 going to have to spend quality time reviewing these
17 applications, even in more depth.

18 So we will get more of a sense as we only have
19 scraped the surface of the review right now, but we got
20 a good healthy taste of it, the applications right now.

21 I'm sorry. Do you have anything else to add?

22 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Nothing in particular, no.

23 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Okay. Is there any public
24 comment? Would anyone like to mention anything?

25 MS. MATTHEWS: My name is Joan Matthews. I'm

1 from Tracy. I'm an applicant for the Redraw the Lines.

2 I just want to congratulate the State Auditors
3 Office on their patience and information that's come
4 out. As I understand it, this is a new process.
5 California is groundbreaking in its attempt to have a
6 citizens' committee. And those of us who are out in the
7 community, volunteering for this, do appreciate your
8 time. I think it's important that you be recognized for
9 the amount of work you are putting in and really going
10 into new waters.

11 Thank you very much.

12 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Thank you.

13 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Thank you.

15 Please state your name. Thank you.

16 MS. MENCHACA: Thank you. My name is Luisa
17 Menchaca [phonetic]. I'm here from Sacramento and I'm
18 also an applicant.

19 I just had a comment relating to the letters of
20 recommendation. I know that I think all of our goal is
21 that the commissioners are good commissioners that end
22 up being selected. But I wanted to know how technical
23 you are -- the letters of recommendation. For example,
24 I saw one applicant who, to me, appeared to be a good
25 applicant, but one of the letters of recommendations was

1 three pages. So I hope that you are not so technical as
2 to say because it was three pages, not two, that that
3 person may not then be deemed qualified. So it's more
4 of a question.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That actually goes to our
6 next item on the agenda, so if you want to move forward
7 you certainly can -- unless there's additional public
8 comments on the item.

9 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Thank you.

10 Any further comment from the public?

11 State your name for the record, please.

12 MS. EDSON-SMITH: I'm Margaret Edson-Smith. I
13 too am a candidate. I have a question for you. As
14 somebody who's graded a lot of lab reports and exams in
15 my life, I wondered if you applied any kind of
16 quantitative process to --

17 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: No.

18 MS. EDSON-SMITH: Really? Okay. I have read
19 many of the applications too, and I find very difficult
20 to call who would be the more qualified.

21 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: You mean some type of
22 scoring? Is that what you are talking about?

23 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: By quantitative, you mean
24 some kind of scoring mechanism to compare?

25 MS. EDSON-SMITH: A scoring mechanism.

1 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: No.

2 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I think that will get into
3 when we start talking about the applicant's
4 qualifications, we'll kind of go over that, and that
5 might kind of clear up a few issues.

6 MS. EDSON-SMITH: Okay. It seems very
7 challenging.

8 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: We're actually prohibited
10 from actually scoring when we consider or recommend our
11 reviews during our reviews.

12 Is there any further public comment at this time?

13 So going to the next item, third item of business
14 on our agenda is our discussion -- a discussion of the
15 qualities and characteristics that we see in an ideal
16 applicant.

17 And before we begin, I just want to point out a
18 few things to the public and I have a few notes that I
19 have jotted down today, so I can keep my thoughts
20 straight. I believe we all have a lot to say today.

21 So as you know, from our last meeting, we had a
22 chance -- we deferred our discussion about the
23 qualifications until we had a chance to review some of
24 the applications. So since then, it kind of got a
25 couple weeks to get a sense of the flavor of the

1 responses of the applicants.

2 Was I not clear?

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: They can hear you down the
4 street.

5 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Right on.

6 So we didn't want to discuss those qualifications
7 at the last meeting because we didn't really want to
8 give someone, an applicant, an unfair advantage at that
9 time, so today we have an opportunity to discuss those
10 qualifications in detail.

11 We're not going to discuss any of the applicants
12 individually, by name, at this point. We just want to
13 give a sense and give the public a sense of what we feel
14 is important to us in an ideal candidate. So we won't
15 be deliberating or making any decisions today. It's
16 purely discussion.

17 And as you know, this is the only opportunity we
18 have to discuss the qualifications of the candidates and
19 anything that matters regarding the decisions that we
20 make.

21 So there are other points I would like to make
22 aware to the public today. I just want to note how
23 important these meetings are to us and that, in the end,
24 we have to unanimously agree about the applicants that
25 we remove from the pool. So we need to have a clear

1 understanding, the panel members, among us have to have
2 a clear understanding about the evaluative process that
3 we're all using to review the applications.

4 And also at the last meeting there was some
5 concerns raised about any secretive qualities we may be
6 adding on top of the criteria set forth in law, and
7 we're just relying on the law. There is no hidden
8 criteria and we can't possibly have formulated a covert
9 list because we don't talk amongst us at all when we're
10 away from this room. So we're sticking and adhering to
11 the criteria.

12 You know, I may see Mary in the hall or whatever
13 and ask her for a pencil, but that's about the only time
14 I ever discuss anything with her or have a conversation
15 with her. We never discuss our matter outside this
16 room.

17 So we're taking this process very seriously and
18 we're trying to vigilantly adhere to Bagley-Keene and
19 transparency requirements in the act, while we're
20 implementing regulations. So the voters have entrusted
21 this office and her staff as no nonsense, tell the
22 truth, telling fact-finding organization [verbatim] to
23 improve the state of California and preserve the quality
24 of life for all Californians. And we intend as
25 panelists to uphold that trust.

1 So with that out of the way, let's begin our
2 discussion. Mary, I was thinking that we could discuss
3 the core qualifications as they are stated in the
4 regs -- impartiality, appreciation for diversity, and
5 also going into the analytical skills.

6 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I agree. And also, one
7 thing I kind of want to discuss is kind of what Kerri
8 was saying. When I am performing this initial review, I
9 am looking at those six essay questions because what I
10 have been finding is, as I read through them, some
11 information might help clarify each applicant's ability
12 to meet those three core qualifications. And then
13 there's sometimes that I have gone in and taken a look
14 at maybe their schooling, where they have put down their
15 schooling, and also some of their jobs. So those are
16 kind of items that I have been looking at.

17 I haven't really gone in and looked at the
18 recommendations at this time and looked at any of the
19 other areas that the applicants marked, because I need
20 to focus our attention on those three core
21 qualifications. Is that kind of what you guys are
22 doing?

23 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Yeah. First off, I just
24 wanted to express my appreciation for having this
25 opportunity to discuss or share my ideas with you guys

1 and hear from you guys, because as Kerri stated, we are
2 completely abiding to the Bagley-Keene requirements and
3 we are not allowed to talk amongst ourselves outside of
4 this room.

5 So in the benefit -- to be efficient in our
6 discussion today, I have a lot to share and I expect to
7 hear a lot from you guys. And when I leave this room
8 today, I want to have a good sense of understanding what
9 is it that each panel member is looking at and why.

10 So I think to make our discussion a little more
11 organized, I think we should break these requirements
12 down into pieces and just go over them one by one,
13 maybe, if the panel agrees.

14 So the first criteria that's in the law, 60800,
15 is about impartiality of the applicants. So let's talk
16 about that first.

17 The law has -- the regulation that we have states
18 that the ideal commissioner for redistricting should be
19 someone who can demonstrate their abilities that they
20 are impartial. And let's talk about that. What does it
21 mean? How do I see -- what do I expect in someone's
22 response that tells me that this individual is, in fact,
23 impartial?

24 So what I am looking at is not -- I'm not
25 expecting somebody not to have any affiliation with

1 political parties or not having any opinions about
2 things. Everybody is entitled to have opinions about,
3 you know, issues, politics, social, economic issues.
4 What I am looking for, first of all, is some statements
5 in response to that question that tells me that even
6 though this individual has opinions about issues and is
7 involved with the politics and economics and social life
8 of the state and the people who live in the state, they
9 have the ability to be independent thinkers. They have
10 the ability to set aside their personal interests and
11 make the decision based on the facts and for the good of
12 everybody. So that's just to begin with.

13 My understanding is that impartiality is very
14 important in the process of making the decisions for the
15 redistricting because, as we learned from our training
16 classes and my personal reading material that was
17 relevant to this subject area, it can be a very
18 difficult decision that has to be made at times, and the
19 decision should be based on solid understanding of what
20 is in the state in terms of who's benefiting or who's
21 not benefiting from those decisions and why.

22 So what is your thoughts on impartiality? When
23 you look at the response to the essay question about
24 impartiality, what is it you are looking for?

25 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: When I read the responses --

1 it's funny. You don't want someone that's going to be
2 so rigid in their point that they can't distinguish
3 between fact and unreliable facts. And it's interesting
4 because some people, by the nature of their position,
5 that they state in their application that they have held
6 in their career, just qualifies them under that
7 qualification.

8 And I feel that these applicants should actually
9 share some characteristic of some kind -- whether it's
10 life experience, occupational, academic, volunteer --
11 that demonstrates, that clearly demonstrates, their
12 degree of impartiality and that they can apply as a
13 commissioner and without just saying that they are.

14 And I've had responses where they say they are,
15 but they are very rigid as they explain themselves. And
16 that, to me, doesn't demonstrate impartiality even
17 though they say they are.

18 And they also have to demonstrate in how it
19 relates to commission work and how they would evaluate
20 and listen to communities of interest and if they are
21 able to set aside their biases and truly, truly
22 understand everybody's viewpoint. People can say that
23 they will do that. But can they truly demonstrate that?

24 I'm looking at -- for characteristics of these
25 core qualifications that really speak to me, to get a

1 sense of who this person is and if they really could do
2 the work. And I understand that. We're going to have
3 to look at these more in depth as we find these ideal
4 candidates. But it's clear to me that they have to
5 demonstrate a clear degree of impartiality in either
6 some type of job experience and explain to us how they
7 did that and tell us their story.

8 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yeah. I agree in the
9 sense of when I was reading through what the individuals
10 that I felt really demonstrated in the sense of their
11 life experiences, where they actually showed
12 impartiality instead of just stating their profession or
13 what their profession does. What I saw that really
14 grabbed me was when they actually demonstrated through
15 some sort of experience, either through volunteer work
16 or from school, where they showed that they had an
17 ability to be impartial.

18 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I totally agree. And just
19 to give an example to clarify this point, because it's
20 important: We may come across a statement that says,
21 well, I'm impartial by profession, for example. I'm a
22 CPA and therefore I have to abide by certain rules from
23 the Board of Accountancy and also the professional
24 requirements and standards. To me, I respect that, but
25 it doesn't help me to really gauge how able this

1 individual is to set aside the personal opinions and
2 make decisions for the good of the people of California.

3 I was fortunate enough to have some experience in
4 the auditing area and, quite frankly, I audited the
5 State Board of California a number of years ago. And
6 one of the -- one of the questions that I had to answer
7 was, the State Board of California has a complaint
8 processing unit that they process all the complaints
9 about attorneys' misconduct. And I was really sure
10 surprised by the amount of the information that was in
11 that system that I reviewed, that the way it helps me
12 now is that applying that knowledge to my judgment in
13 terms of a statement that's in response to that question
14 that says, well, I'm impartial because I'm an attorney,
15 for example, I respect that again, but I think I need to
16 know more about, you know, your own personal
17 experiences, professional experiences, demonstrate to me
18 what does it mean, why you are impartial, so that's a
19 great point.

20 I mean, that's the core of the requirements 60800
21 that you don't need to be a lawyer or a CPA or any
22 profession or any education background. You need to
23 show me that you have opinions about social, economic,
24 politics issues, but you have the ability to set them
25 aside and be independent thinker, not only yourself but

1 also if you have a special relationship with a family
2 member, for example, we want to make sure that does not
3 influence your own decision-making process, so, to me,
4 that's the core of this impartiality issue.

5 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yeah. I agree with you
6 also, Nasir, in the sense of also, the individuals
7 demonstrating that they are able to identify that they
8 do have their own opinions, but they are able to set
9 aside those opinions. So in the sense of providing
10 example, that they were able to do that.

11 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: And I think this has really
12 become evident for me and how important, critical, it is
13 through the training that we have received so far. Our
14 trainers have instilled in us the importance of
15 communities of interest and the ability to listen and
16 not just listen but really, truly have a vested interest
17 in hearing the interest of the community and different
18 viewpoints.

19 It's critical that they apply that to -- in
20 addition to applying the laws. And they consider that
21 while we make those decisions and drawing those lines,
22 the decisions that they make will affect the voting
23 power and strength of the candidate of their choice
24 eventually. So like our last -- Ana Henderson. She
25 said she went out and she hired social workers to help

1 her understand, there's subgroups within these
2 communities of the same, similar race and ethnicities,
3 that may have different political views, different
4 interests, that are important to them. So I think the
5 commissioner has to be truly approachable, too, and the
6 public has to really feel that these commissioners are
7 identifying with the public's needs and truly
8 identifying and assessing their -- ever opposing side
9 also, any complaints that they may have and truly
10 considering the interest of the community while they
11 make their decisions. I think it's critical and we have
12 been pounded over the head by various trainers on that
13 point. Some people may say they care, but they may not
14 really. And I think it will show as we progress in the
15 interviews really.

16 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I agree. They have to --
17 because the commissioners need to go out to these
18 various locations, that they have to be able to -- and
19 that's another thing that I am seeing, is, where these
20 individuals are demonstrating somewhere in those six
21 essay questions that they are able to listen to both
22 sides of the discussion, because they are going to have
23 to go to communities. They are going to have to talk to
24 various individuals and be able to understand what is
25 being said.

1 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: And you are making
2 these -- you are sharing these ideas within the context
3 of impartiality or an additional quality?

4 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: No. In the context of
5 impartiality. I just -- I think that part of
6 impartiality, when they are demonstrating that, in their
7 examples, they may cite somewhere where they had some
8 kind of involvement with a community, where they had to
9 go and they had to make a decision on an issue, or they
10 ultimately had to finalize a project involving gathering
11 various points of views from different communities in
12 order to accomplish that.

13 And in demonstrating and providing that example,
14 they have said some key points about how they
15 demonstrate impartiality, especially when it becomes
16 contentious arguments on both sides. These people may
17 have provided an example that clearly demonstrates that
18 to me, and that's what I am looking for, not just
19 regurgitating the regulations. It just doesn't
20 demonstrate. These characteristics have to come out
21 through their writing and description of how they can
22 meet that core qualification, because we have many
23 people that have done a lot of community work, but maybe
24 they haven't met all the core qualifications.

25 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Another thing is, as I've

1 been reading through the applications, what I have
2 noticed is individuals providing their opinion. That,
3 to me, is great. However, what I really want to see is
4 that demonstration.

5 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: That they are impartial.

6 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yeah. Of impartiality.

7 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: And that could be based on,
8 again, educational background, experience, life
9 experience, professional experience.

10 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Exactly.

11 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Yeah.

12 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: So their opinions are
13 great. However, I want to see them apply those
14 opinions.

15 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I agree.

16 Any other thoughts on impartiality, or should we
17 move forward to the next?

18 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I think we can move forward.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Just a suggestion: Do you
20 want to consider maybe asking the public as you weigh
21 in, as you go through the regs? Does anybody have any
22 thoughts about impartiality? And would that help maybe
23 facilitate the discussion?

24 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Yes. We love to hear.

25 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Great idea.

1 Would the public like to comment on this
2 qualification?

3 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Help us out, please.

4 MS. MATTHEWS: Joan Matthews, Tracy, California.
5 If you yell help, here I am. Because I was a teacher, I
6 think my first feeling is to come forward.

7 And I was so delighted to hear you say that what
8 we needed to do was demonstrate. Because as a trustee
9 at San Joaquin Delta College for 13 years, dealing with
10 different unions and dealing with the public, that came
11 into the fore. So it's critical not just to state, but
12 to have the actual experience, on-the-ground,
13 feet-on-the-ground experience, when someone comes
14 forward from a community, expressing a view from that
15 particular community, to have that point of view
16 registered in your brain and to empathize with it.

17 We have to be intellectually honest. I think
18 that's where we need to go with this. Intellectual
19 honesty is where we need to go. You really have all
20 summed that up and I thank you for that.

21 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Thank you. Is there any
22 further public comment?

23 Let's proceed on the next qualification.

24 As we look at a person's ability to appreciate
25 California's diverse demographics and geography, I feel

1 that this qualification, I believe, was kind of tough to
2 meet for some of the applicants and how they described
3 it. And a lot of people said they vacation here and
4 there and they appreciate the campgrounds and the
5 mountains, the beaches, and all that and what California
6 has to offer.

7 But I really feel that they needed to describe
8 and demonstrate their appreciation to the work of the
9 Commission and not just I love my neighborhood because
10 it's diverse and it has great ethnic food. I needed a
11 little bit more of substance to get to know how they
12 could really apply this inner decision making.

13 Did you find that?

14 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I agree. This is another
15 very critical and core requirement in terms of someone
16 who's able to do the work of the Commission. They have
17 to be able to relate to California, not only in terms of
18 understanding the people, the population of California,
19 but also understanding how the population relates to the
20 geographic localities of California and how the
21 different localities in California forms different
22 populations, political preferences. So it's not only
23 about, yes, I know California's geography, and as Kerri
24 mentioned, naming some of the localities, and, yes, I
25 know different people live in California. It's more

1 about understanding of how they relate to each other and
2 how does that impact the California's redistricting
3 work.

4 So, basically, for example, one of the issues
5 that I'm looking at is ability to demonstrate that, for
6 example, people of a special group who have similarities
7 in terms of ethnicity or racial or socioeconomic
8 relationships have similarity in political preferences,
9 for example. So those are kind of, you know,
10 informative statements or useful statements in answer to
11 that question that will help me to make a judgment in
12 terms of, do they really understand and are they able to
13 demonstrate that they really understand California's
14 diverse demographics and diversity in terms of
15 population of the different ethnicities and racial and
16 socioeconomic backgrounds, and how they tie them
17 together and how they consider that diversity in the
18 decision-making process when they actually be in the
19 Commission to redraw the lines.

20 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: One thing -- when I was
21 looking through the applications, I saw, just like
22 Kerri, that a lot of people said I have traveled
23 throughout the state or I traveled throughout the world.
24 But did they really show me -- demonstrate or write in
25 their essays, you know, in any of those six essays, that

1 they truly appreciated and understood the diversity of
2 California, that the various regions have different
3 needs and that individuals that are particular ethnicity
4 in northern California may have different needs and
5 expectations than the individuals in Southern California
6 or even in urban areas and rural areas. So that's what
7 I wanted to see or that's when those individuals really
8 were stronger to me and being -- for the applicants.

9 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Yes. I notice a lot of
10 applicants, they focus on ethnicity and race issues and
11 that is not -- those are part of the components of the
12 appreciation for diverse demographics and geography. It
13 goes beyond that in terms of -- the law states ethnicity
14 to gender, sexual orientation, economic status, and
15 geography. So all those things make up a diverse
16 requirement. And I think it's important that they not
17 only -- the applicant not only recognize diversity in
18 those terms in the state that -- among the citizens of
19 California, but they also understand the importance of
20 preserving these communities that support the electoral
21 viability in relation to their respective interests and
22 preferences. Because they really need to understand how
23 that relates to their opportunities in the electoral
24 process.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I would just add that

1 60805A1, it mentions, you know, race, ethnicity, gender,
2 sexual orientation, and economic status, but it's a
3 includes but not limited to. So you may have other
4 types of diversity amongst your population that's
5 equally important, such as agricultural communities.
6 You know, farmers have unique interests in this state,
7 versus developers. So it doesn't just have to be those
8 four criteria.

9 You certainly are limited to six criteria in
10 terms of the diversity of your Commission, the political
11 affiliation as well as the other five, but this one's a
12 little more open-ended, and so applicants can talk about
13 many things. But I think your point is well-taken, that
14 if I am understanding you correctly, you want to see
15 them talk about how that relates to the task of
16 redistricting.

17 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: That's my understanding,
18 yeah.

19 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yes. And then I'm
20 thinking what Kerri is trying to get across is that
21 these individuals of the Commission need to understand
22 that these communities have very different needs and
23 they need to look at that and maybe help preserve it so
24 their voice can also be heard. So that understanding.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Certainly under Section 5

1 of the Voting Rights Act, that is the legal obligation.

2 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Exactly.

3 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Yes. Our trainers did
5 emphasize the importance of the Voters Rights Act and
6 how it affects these communities of interest also, and
7 how it's important that the decisions that they make are
8 going to affect their ability to vote for the candidate
9 of choice. But I think it's critical that they
10 understand the electoral process in terms of a
11 diverse -- the diversity that's offered in the state of
12 California among citizens.

13 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: And what we did receive
14 was some training from Ms. Clark that kind of gave us a
15 background of the Voting Rights Act.

16 And another thing is, when I was reading through
17 this, to also see individuals or applicants being able
18 to show that they understood that there's this
19 requirement and it has to be followed by the
20 commissioners. There was some applicants where we -- I
21 would read through and I would see that the applicant
22 would say I believe that it should only be based on
23 population and be kind of like in a grid and not putting
24 in any consideration into diversity or ethnicity.

25 That's some of the responses that I received or I

1 saw on the applications and those, I definitely said,
2 these individuals are very --

3 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Not as competitive.

4 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Exactly. Thank you.

5 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I certainly relate to that
6 example, because what I saw in -- you know, it's just an
7 example. For example, if they say, for example, a
8 strong statement about, you know, how the redistricting
9 should be done or how the lines should be done, the
10 statement is such that suggest the applicant has a
11 personal kind of approach to the issue, without -- with
12 disregarding all of the requirements that's in the law.
13 To me, that's also a weak statement.

14 For example, to make a statement, as you said,
15 that, you know, the lines should be drawn based on the
16 population, to me, that doesn't sound like that's even
17 in compliance with the law, because the requirement is
18 that they should consider all these different factors,
19 especially the diversity and demographics of the state.

20 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I agree.

21 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Another thing is, when I
22 was looking within diversity and how the applicant -- I
23 will call them individuals, the applicants were
24 describing their understanding of diversity, individuals
25 that might be of a particular ethnicity but only

1 demonstrated or shown that they only focused in on that
2 particular ethnicity that they were, I didn't feel that
3 they could really show me that they understood diversity
4 because, to me, diversity means they understand all the
5 different, diverse characteristics --

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ethnicities.

7 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: -- ethnicities within
8 California, and they could appreciate those.

9 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: In other words, this also
10 kind of like relates to impartiality. If all they have
11 to offer is about their group or their socioeconomic
12 group or ethnicity, that tells me that the person
13 doesn't appreciate California's diversity. Because this
14 is about California. It's not about a special group.

15 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: No, it isn't. And I agree
16 with you.

17 I found that that's an important point because as
18 I was going through the applications, I mean, as I
19 looked through it, I go in order -- one, two three, four
20 five, six -- and so I read their blurb on impartiality
21 and think to myself, okay, this candidate has a decent
22 response to impartiality and meets the qualification. I
23 get to the next essay on diversity.

24 As they describe their experiences and provide
25 us -- and as I evaluate their response to diversity, I

1 realize, you know, this candidate may not truly meet the
2 requirement of impartiality because they are rigid in
3 some way, and there's something that kind of clues me in
4 that in their description they may not be analytical as
5 I go along further in the review.

6 So it's interesting how a compilation of our
7 review in totality, when you are reviewing the
8 application, you realize -- you have to really assess,
9 does the candidate really meet these qualifications as
10 you read further and further along? Because as they
11 start telling their story, you may get a sense that they
12 may not. And it's kind of interesting. And you have to
13 kind of gauge it. It's kind of a judgment call on our
14 part, I feel.

15 Does anyone else have any further comments from
16 the panel on the ideal qualifications?

17 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Not under diversity.

18 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Yeah.

19 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I think we have kind of an
20 understanding of how to really look at that.

21 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Yeah.

22 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I agree.

23 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Is there any comment, public
24 comment on diversity?

25 Please go to the podium, ma'am, and state your

1 name. Thank you.

2 MS. MENCHACA: Luisa Menchaca, Sacramento.

3 To me, this characteristic is probably one of the
4 most difficult for you to evaluate for the reasons you
5 have indicated. I just wanted to make a comment with
6 respect to the necessity factor in your prior discussion
7 of impartiality. It is possible that if a person's
8 experience just has been in advocacy with a particular
9 group, that what they are doing is showing you a
10 demonstrable example of their experience.

11 So I think you need to be a little bit cautious
12 with that, because, on the one hand, maybe they focused
13 on it a lot, but just like with impartiality, if they
14 are able to demonstrate that their advocacy really just
15 made them sensitive to what a particular group needs to
16 do to become an advocate, for example, I would just
17 caution you not to necessarily look at their work and
18 ethnicity as being automatically something that may be a
19 negative factor in terms of impartiality.

20 Because, again, when you were talking about
21 impartiality earlier, you are looking for examples,
22 demonstrable experiences. And that may be what people
23 would be doing when they talk about their experiences
24 with respect to working with ethnic groups or with any
25 particular category -- you know, sexual orientation,

1 gender, whatever.

2 Okay? Thank you. Just a caution.

3 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Thank you.

4 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I agree. I appreciate your
5 understanding that this is the most challenging for us
6 to make that judgment. And I hope the message that we
7 get across is that we are very cautious of this
8 requirement, and perhaps this is why it's spelled out in
9 the law, that the applicant who will be the best
10 candidate to serve on the Commission will have to have
11 appreciation for diversity, and that's so broad.

12 And we will definitely pay close attention to
13 draw reasonable and rational conclusions from the
14 statements that the applicants make in response to this
15 question.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Is there any further comment
18 from the public? Should we proceed to the next?

19 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I kind of just want to
20 discuss a little bit what -- it's Louise, right? I
21 agree with what she's saying in the sense of, you
22 know -- in the sense of ethnicity. What I have also
23 seen is these individuals also demonstrating that even
24 though they are in these groups, these groups reach out
25 to other areas, so that's one thing that I was looking

1 at. And I think in the sense of -- go ahead.

2 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I'm sorry. Actually, as she
3 was speaking, it hit me that I also when I look at it,
4 say, Question No. 5, and they have anything else to add,
5 like any activities they have done, I realize that I
6 know some of their experience, it may reflect in their
7 essays above, that maybe they worked exclusively with a
8 particular ethnic group on a project or something that
9 demonstrates their appreciation of demographics and
10 geography.

11 But they've also worked actively in a variety of
12 groups and organizations that are diverse and so you get
13 a sense, even though they maybe didn't cite a story or
14 an experience specifically above, they may have cited
15 other things that I think shows me that they are
16 diverse. They do appreciate other ethnicities, races,
17 and other locals in the state of California and without
18 regard to their economic status.

19 So it's interesting how it kind a develops a
20 little bit more. The more the applicant has to provide
21 in their essay to give us a sense of who they are and
22 how they can meet these qualifications, the better it is
23 for us and they can plop it in wherever they can free
24 write. And I feel like we have an obligation to
25 consider all those areas seriously at this point.

1 So did you find that?

2 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yes. When I was looking
3 through, I would see, you know, even if they volunteered
4 or engaged in these various groups, that they would also
5 demonstrate that this group wasn't just focused in on
6 one particular ethnicity. It was helping other
7 individuals -- homeless or going out to other
8 communities.

9 So I did see that these individuals could
10 demonstrate that they were diverse with various other
11 items, like you were saying, Kerri, throughout the
12 application. But there is some that were very, very
13 rigid. And when you would read through it, you would
14 see and read, like Kerri was saying, that they were very
15 only focused in on a particular group and excluded all
16 other groups, whatever it was.

17 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Any other comments from the
18 public? I'm sorry.

19 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: No. That's okay. I was
20 going to say that. Is there any further comments?

21 So we will proceed to the next qualification.
22 Let's talk about analytical skills in a candidate.

23 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Can I make one suggestion
24 on this? Since this is so voluminous in what we're
25 going to talk about, can we break it down just a little

1 bit more than -- like we did for impartiality and
2 diversity? Can we break it down into a little bit more
3 segments, because if they are talking about writing and
4 basic math skills, can we kind of go by those areas?

5 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I believe the more detailed
6 discussion we have, the more benefit I will get from it.
7 So why not.

8 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Sure. Sure.

9 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Would that be okay?

10 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: But I have to tell you, as we
11 discuss these qualifications, things pop in my head that
12 I may have and really left out in my prior discussion
13 earlier, so I just want to make sure I get those points
14 across. So bear with me. They may not totally apply to
15 analytical, but as I think about it more and as I hear
16 you discuss certain things, it prompts my memory about
17 it.

18 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Definitely bring them up
19 and that way we can get an understanding of what
20 everyone's looking at.

21 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: So are you suggesting that
22 we should have more of these meetings?

23 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: No.

24 Mary, would you like to start? Nasir?

25 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I'm sorry.

1 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Since you suggested it, you
2 break it down. Maybe you can go ahead.

3 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Okay. The first one that
4 comes underneath the relevant analytical skills is the
5 relevant analytical skills means the learned abilities
6 that the commissioner may need to successfully complete
7 the work of the Commission. So that is kind of -- I was
8 envisioning that as anything other than those ones that
9 were a little bit more defined. It didn't really kind
10 of talk about the hiring of staff and -- you know, in
11 the sense of a voting. So I was kind of putting my
12 opinions of those in that area.

13 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: That would support that?

14 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yeah. Because what it
15 really goes into next is the gathering and comprehending
16 information, and that kind of goes into the meat.

17 Because one thing that I am thinking in the sense
18 of relevant analytical skills, when I was reading
19 through the applicants, I'm thinking, what does a
20 commissioner have to do? They are going to have to hire
21 individuals; they are going to hire consultants; they
22 are going to have to listen to their information.

23 So they are going to have to need to have some
24 sort of skills for that. They are also going to have to
25 vote and approve and defend any final maps that are

1 developed. What kind of attributes do they need for
2 that? And those can kind of fall into some of these.
3 But I was thinking, you know, in the sense of hiring,
4 they need to know -- kind of be able to be a leader, a
5 facilitator, to kind of talk.

6 So that's kind of what I wanted to see, was
7 individuals that are able to make decisions, able to
8 have a plan and be able to implement that plan.

9 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I agree. I agree. And I
10 mean, you want the commissioner to be able to -- they
11 are going to get volumes of data. It's going to be
12 complex. They are not going to have to be rocket
13 scientists or mathematicians. But there has to be
14 someone that can decipher through all this data, truly
15 understand what it means in terms of how it relates to
16 the law and the requirements thereof, and just be able
17 to decipher relevant from irrelevant information.

18 And we talk about, say, they are going to have to
19 understand statistical information maybe, but not
20 limited to statistical information. I believe, as we
21 learned in training, you know, you are going to have to
22 determine equal population among these districts. It's
23 going to constantly change as you are developing the
24 maps.

25 We actually, in training, experienced that in

1 trying to draw lines ourself, and we watched Karin
2 Mac Donald do that, and it's not that easy. And there
3 are a lot of -- and that was only based, I believe, on
4 just the census part of the data, not all of the data.
5 So there are a lot of factors involved when the
6 commissioner is trying to draw these maps. And so they
7 are going to have to just not only rely on the
8 consultants, but understand what they are doing. I
9 mean, truly understand, not just accept the information
10 that they feed them. They are going to have to be able
11 to follow the law and embrace, really, the Voter Rights
12 Act.

13 I think it's truly important, there's a lot of
14 issues involved in violating Section 2 and Section 5 of
15 the Voters Rights Act, so they really have to have an
16 understanding. It's not that easy. I believe we were
17 informed that the Section 2 and Section 5 are truly
18 important, as they draw these maps and as they defend
19 these maps. We will have to really work with each other
20 to develop in these districts appropriately.

21 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I agree. Do you want to
22 continue with your list, Mary?

23 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: We can just go from that,
24 because I just wanted to say that there's other
25 qualities that these individuals, as a Commission, that

1 we know that they are going to have to do or perform.

2 But we can go in the sense of a going down the
3 list in the sense of gathering. Did you want to start
4 with that one?

5 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Sure. Sure.

6 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Okay.

7 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: So to me, an ideal
8 commissioner for me is someone who can read and
9 understand complex and dense information. What does it
10 mean? Someone who's able to understand the information
11 in a complex report that has financial data, for
12 example; statistical data, for example; mapping
13 information, for example.

14 The information that the commissioners will need
15 for the decision-making process is not just simple
16 information. It's about the statistical census reports
17 that they get, the population in different regions of
18 the state, the mapping of different locations depending
19 on geography, for example. So not only they have to be
20 able to read and understand that information, but also
21 to evaluate what it means.

22 Because no matter how good the information is
23 that you have, if you are not able to evaluate and
24 separate facts from opinions, you are not going to be
25 able to draw a educated conclusion or opinion on that

1 information.

2 So as equally important is the personal ability,
3 maybe, you know, the experiences that you have in life,
4 the type of work that you have done, and your training,
5 for example. That all comes into play. If you mention
6 that in response to this question, that helps me
7 understand how able are you to evaluate the information
8 that you will have to have to make those decisions,
9 being a census report, being demographic information or
10 mathematics, for example.

11 As long as you are able to use it in your
12 decision-making process, to me, that's a strength.
13 That's an ability that the commissioner should have.

14 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: And how I have seen
15 individuals show this -- because a lot of this -- some
16 of these I thought could be implied from their
17 profession, their schooling, and by also demonstrating
18 within the essay response.

19 So I kind of gave credit to individuals that had
20 schooling to -- you know, in the sense of having a
21 degree or going to college or being able to read the
22 newspaper to show that, okay, they have the basic
23 writing skills. They might not have demonstrated that
24 they could understand and interpret the technical
25 writings, but then they can also do that. So I kind of

1 gave some credit to their schooling, their profession.

2 Is that kind of what you are, you were --

3 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Are you telling me if they
4 said they were a newspaper reporter and they have
5 experience in journalism, and they didn't describe
6 anything else, would you mark that, that they -- would
7 you give them credit for their ability to write?

8 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yes.

9 DR. LEMONS: If I can just add a comment here, to
10 me, education does not necessarily have anything to do
11 with a person's ability to be able to read dense data
12 and draw conclusion and separate facts from opinions.
13 To me, education has a lot to do with the person's
14 ability to do those things in a way that makes them
15 prepared to do that. But to me, it's beyond that.

16 I'm not expecting somebody who has a PhD, for
17 example, to be able to do the redistricting job, because
18 redistricting is not only about one specific field of,
19 you know, academics, for example. It's about your
20 collective ability from education, life experience, your
21 personal abilities, and characteristics that enables you
22 to gather the information that you need to have and act
23 upon it. So interpretation of that information, that's
24 more critical to me.

25 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Okay. Now, how -- would

1 you give somebody that has a PhD the benefit of the
2 doubt if they didn't clearly show that they could
3 understand dense and technical material, that if they
4 received their PhD, that they wouldn't be able to do
5 that?

6 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I just want to say that I
7 have had some candidates that said they have advanced
8 degrees, doctorates, master's, whatever, but they also
9 went on to say that they just didn't state their degree
10 and said, okay, because I have a master's or a
11 doctorate, I qualify. They went beyond that to describe
12 their thesis project or what they did to earn that and
13 how they discerned all that information, because a lot
14 of them brought a lot of information to the table to
15 kind of described to me what demonstrated their
16 analytical ability.

17 I felt like if you are serious enough to apply
18 for this position, if you are serious about being a
19 commissioner, the applicant should be able to provide an
20 explanation of that and demonstrate to us. I feel like
21 they have an obligation to do that, to get a sense of,
22 okay, not only did you say you earned that degree.
23 That's fine and dandy. But what did you do to
24 demonstrate these skills that could apply to
25 redistricting and the redistricting work? It goes

1 beyond just citing your advanced degree, citing you are
2 just an attorney. I understand that. In legal work,
3 you have to apply legal standards, you have to interpret
4 it. I get that.

5 But give me something that, you know, if you are
6 a pure contract lawyer, employment lawyer, that you can
7 apply your skills to redistricting. I feel like --
8 maybe as we get further along in looking at this, I'm
9 going to scrutinize these even more.

10 But I didn't want to just rely on someone's
11 position, rely on the fact that just because you are a
12 CPA and you take ethics courses every year, it's
13 required that you are impartial or something. You know?

14 I felt like you need to give me a little bit more
15 than that to actually give me a sense that you can do
16 and you have the ability to do Commission work. You
17 have the endurance. You have that drive to do this and
18 that you embrace the law.

19 A lot of people have cited their experiences, but
20 they didn't quite make that jump to how they would apply
21 that to Commission work, and sometimes it concerns me.
22 Sometimes it was enough to say, okay, I think these
23 people would be among the 300 to 500 most qualified.

24 So do you --

25 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: In the sense of the

1 relevant analytical skills, I agree with you in the
2 sense of impartiality and diversity of saying that they
3 have to demonstrate their ability to do these. But in
4 the sense of the relevant analytical skills, I was
5 giving individuals that -- you know, with journalism
6 degrees saying, okay, you can write. You are able to
7 get a lot of information and synthesize this.

8 They have provided -- I see individuals that have
9 provided books that they have written or articles that
10 they have written. So that's -- I kind of gave them
11 credit for those, even though they didn't give me in
12 detail how they made that or prepared that.

13 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: No doubt, Mary. I agree
14 with you, that, you know, that there's a lot of, you
15 know, credit we should give to people who are educated,
16 but I don't want to limit my judgment just based on
17 education. I want to make it based on their
18 demonstration of abilities to be able to do the work.

19 So clearly someone who has a PhD, as Kerri said,
20 I can make a judgment in my opinion that they are able
21 to do the work. But have they demonstrated that they
22 have used that skill? Do they have any relevant
23 analytical skills that is required by the type of work
24 that the commissioners will do?

25 So to me, education enables a person to be able

1 to think through problems and gather information and use
2 it to the benefit of whatever objective they have. But
3 I think the Commission at the end will have to be a
4 diversion Commission, and that's based on what
5 California's population is. So if California is made up
6 of all these different groups of people or different
7 socioeconomic individuals, or groups of individuals,
8 then my goal is to make sure that the ideal Commission,
9 for me, who will make it to the final 60 of the most
10 qualified applicants, the list should include a good mix
11 of all these different individuals who are all able, in
12 my opinion, to do the work. It's not just about people
13 who has PhDs.

14 That's kind of like the message that I want to
15 get across, that I do give credit for that, but I also
16 want to make sure that, you know, we have a good mix of
17 different people, not only based on ethnicity and race
18 and economic background and all that. A good
19 representation of what California's all about. It's the
20 population of California and the people who live here.

21 But of course, our goal will be to make sure that
22 those individuals based on the facts that we have, which
23 is information in the application, are able to do the
24 work, the type of work that the Commission will have to
25 do.

1 So going back to, for example, your example of
2 journalists. No doubt, you know, that person who has a
3 law degree, for example, or journalist or PhD, they are
4 able to read the information. But the work of the
5 Commission is not limited to just reading information or
6 trying to be fast in reading, for example.

7 One of the issues that I'm emphasizing on -- and
8 we learned this from our training -- is ability to not
9 only understand the laws that govern redistricting
10 process, but also to abide by it. So, for example, we
11 learned that one of the first training that we had, I
12 believe it was back in February, that there are certain
13 federal laws that apply in the redistricting process,
14 and there are certain state laws that apply to the
15 redistricting process. Obviously a person who has a law
16 degree will know that, and I have no problem making a
17 judgment that they are able to do that.

18 But again, it's about the statements that we see
19 in the response to that question should tell me that
20 this person not only understands the law, but also
21 abides by it, and knows the complexity of all these
22 different factors that are in play in the process of
23 redistricting.

24 So, for example --

25 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I'm not saying that we

1 only look at PhDs and stuff. I'm saying that someone
2 with a PhD can do the basic math, that someone with a
3 PhD most likely can read. So these basic skills. So
4 I'm giving them the -- I'm just interpreting that, yes,
5 you can do these -- some of these basic skills.

6 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I know what you are saying.

7 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Sorry if I misunderstood,
8 but I was trying to make sure that I understand. I
9 think I understood.

10 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: No. And I'm not saying
11 that we're going to have PhDs or lawyers and stuff. No.
12 It has to be diverse. What I am saying is, when I'm
13 seeing somebody that has a PhD, they don't have to tell
14 me that they can read or they can do basic math or that,
15 you know, there's certain implied characteristics I'm
16 thinking that these individuals have.

17 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: And analytical. This area,
18 this criteria is very, very broad, and it's massive, and
19 there's a lot of areas where I believe a candidate can
20 show their strengths and weaknesses in all those areas.
21 And I'm not -- my ideal candidate may be a statistician.
22 I don't know.

23 But I believe that when it comes down to the
24 14-member Commission, there may be some that have strong
25 skills in mapping because just by the nature of what

1 they have done for a living.

2 There may be that some attorneys -- so they are
3 going to be well versed in the law. But, you know,
4 these Commission members, they should be able to embrace
5 consensus decision-making also. So I'm seeing -- and I
6 didn't really take any stats on this, but I'm looking at
7 candidates that I feel are truly ideal, they come from
8 all walks of life, all professions.

9 And it's really fascinating because you would
10 think that someone who hasn't been in the workforce in
11 the last 20 years may kind of be out of it a little bit
12 and not in tune with the political process and not
13 engaged. But yet, from their responses, it's pretty
14 amazing what they have to offer. And their
15 understanding for the Voters Rights Act and the
16 electoral process and the importance of it. So it
17 really comes across in their responses and how much
18 description they can provide in those areas.

19 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: So what I hear us saying,
20 that it's not only your educational or professional
21 background, but it's your collective qualities in terms
22 of your ability to understand what it takes to
23 redistrict and how it should be done.

24 Like Mary suggested about, you know, the
25 qualities of being an effective member of the

1 Commission, that's in the law. And for example, an
2 effective communicator, somebody who can communicate,
3 for example, because when you are in the Commission, you
4 will be presented with all the challenges that there is.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Pull the microphone a
6 little bit closer.

7 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I'm sorry. So it's
8 basically -- I lost my train of thought. That's okay.
9 Don't worry about it.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Darn lawyer.

11 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: So it's the collective
12 quality of skills that someone should have and possess
13 to be able to do that kind of work. It's not always
14 easy. You have to make difficult decisions. You have
15 to listen to the people. You have to be able to think
16 on your toes and analyze the information and make
17 decisions that are not only sound, not only to the
18 benefit of the population, but also in accordance with
19 the law. It's in compliance with the legal requirements
20 that has to be taken into account.

21 So I am looking for the collective quality of all
22 those skills, and throughout the application I'm
23 searching for information that helps me make that
24 decision to see whether or not this individual is
25 capable of doing this kind of work.

1 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: One question: In a sense
2 of -- when I was reading through the applicants, I would
3 see individuals that were city council members or on
4 various boards. Would you -- if they did not clearly
5 demonstrate that they were able to effectively perform
6 public hearings, would you give them the benefit of the
7 doubt that since they have gone through city council,
8 you know, they are a city council member and they have
9 to go through board meetings, or if they are on a board,
10 that they most likely have these abilities?

11 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I will try not to interpret
12 the information. There's no doubt that somebody who has
13 served on any commission or board or council, they at
14 least have the experience of being in that, but unless
15 they tell me, I don't know how successful they were. So
16 again, I will be looking at the collective quality.

17 What did they do, when they have the opportunity
18 to be -- to participate in a council meeting, for
19 example, or a board meeting, how successful were they?
20 If there's not enough information to help me, I wouldn't
21 try to interpret that as being a more competitive
22 applicant as compared to the rest of the pool.

23 Yes, you did have responsibilities to make
24 decisions for the city, and, again, there's no doubt
25 that's a good experience to have. But unless they tell

1 me how successful they were or how they can apply that
2 to the redistricting of California. California is a
3 huge state. There's a lot of factors in play in terms
4 of demographics, populations, and legal requirements and
5 all that.

6 So did I answer your question, Mary?

7 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yeah. And is it how you
8 were looking at it also, Kerri?

9 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Usually when I saw somebody
10 that mentioned that they had commission or board work,
11 they usually explained pretty sufficiently what they did
12 and usually it hit on all three of the qualifications,
13 but they actually did -- some of them did a really good
14 job at explaining what they did, what they accomplished,
15 what they did and the struggles they had during their
16 meetings. And it kind of demonstrated their ability to
17 embrace consensus, whether they embraced consensus
18 decision-making or not, and the inherent problems,
19 maybe, in a board or a member and how they were working
20 with each other to listen to communities of interest,
21 and it kind of drew in all of that by their explanation
22 and their work. A lot of them didn't just cite it. It
23 was a basis for their explanation in telling us their
24 story and how they applied it. I haven't really seen
25 where they have just listed it and didn't explain.

1 But I did find some that said I was a member of
2 an organization that kind of alluded that they may have
3 had more involvement. But I felt like, if they didn't
4 explain it in the essay, they didn't take the time to
5 really give us the depth and the understanding of the
6 work that they did that would apply to the Commission
7 work, according to these criteria and any of the other
8 ones, I couldn't really make a judgment call on whether
9 I wanted to throw them in the most qualified candidates.
10 Because I didn't want to make any assumptions that, you
11 know, just because this person served on a board that
12 they met these qualifications.

13 Like Nasir said, they have to give you a little
14 bit more of an explanation that truly demonstrates. I'm
15 trying to see their characteristics that would apply.
16 Because it's very interesting to find that these
17 characteristics develop further and further as they
18 write more and more. And so I think their true colors
19 will come out. But you really have to get inside this
20 person to see, you know, who they really are, what they
21 have to bring to these qualities.

22 Because they are broad. Some people just say, I
23 have experience working in Microsoft Word, and that's
24 great. But do they meet any of the other qualities?
25 And a lot of them, they totally missed the boat. They

1 described something that's totally irrelevant. And it
2 sounds like from their experience, they could have
3 demonstrated and they showed potential to provide us a
4 really good response, but they failed to do so.

5 But I felt like if you are serious about
6 Commission work, you would provide us and understand
7 what we were asking for in the law and the application
8 and the direct link of the law. So they knew exactly --
9 what was expected, I guess, for us to review and what
10 information they needed to provide to us.

11 So I don't know if that answers your question or
12 not.

13 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Because this is the first
14 time I'm getting this information from my colleagues and
15 so I'm trying to feel, when they are looking at these
16 applicants, what exactly are they looking at? And I
17 wanted to make sure that we are consistent so it would
18 be a little bit easier when we get to trying to narrow
19 down the three to five hundred, down to the 120 and
20 eventually 60 of the most qualified.

21 So when you are looking at this -- and this is
22 just the relevant analytical skills for -- so you are
23 seeing a lot of individuals demonstrating this. I see
24 some demonstration, but some of it, you know, I was
25 seeing the applicant would want me to imply some of

1 these qualities under just relevant analytical skills.

2 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: They said something and they
3 didn't explain.

4 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Not very well.

5 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Yeah. And would you actually
6 feel that they met that qualification at this point?

7 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Now, in the sense of if
8 they were a strong applicant, most likely not. However,
9 in the sense of just reviewing it and kind of giving
10 them --

11 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: If they hit on all the
12 other -- strong impartiality, strong appreciation of
13 demographics and geography and maybe they didn't
14 demonstrate so much detail in analytical, but they still
15 met the minimum qualification in the sense of some of
16 these areas and some of --

17 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Right. In the sense that
18 they had to demonstrate, you know, like, key points,
19 what's under relevant analytical skills. But there's so
20 many key points that I was thinking, oh, my gosh, that I
21 would kind of give them a little bit under that area.

22 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Okay. I think I know what
23 you are saying, because I came across that where you
24 have applicants that clearly miss the boat on every
25 single response and then you have those that really made

1 a concerted effort to provide us with some information.
2 And as I'm plugging away, a little weak in this area,
3 but they still met the qualifications at this point. I
4 want to throw them in the three to five hundred and give
5 them consideration further.

6 Is that what you are saying?

7 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yes. Exactly.

8 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I agree.

9 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Okay.

10 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: And just to add a comment
11 again, I do appreciate that this is challenging and some
12 of this is judgmental. But what's important is that we
13 are not removing anybody from the pool yet. It's just
14 our way of ranking them between --

15 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: We're not ranking. We're
16 just --

17 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: In terms of --

18 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: -- comparing them --

19 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Correct.

20 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: -- to one another.

21 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Correct.

22 But ranking in the sense that some of them are
23 standing as strong and some are not as strong when we
24 compare them. So it helps us to see when we meet in
25 about a month or so, you mentioned the first week of

1 June meeting -- I don't know exactly when. But by that
2 meeting, we will have gone through all of these
3 applications and made those decisions in terms of, are
4 they strong or are they just in the pool or they are, as
5 you said, missing the boat, for example.

6 So what I see from the limited number of
7 applications that I have reviewed so far, some of them
8 are just easy to decide on. They are just getting it.
9 It's a strong response to the questions. Some of them
10 are easy to decide, you are not as strong. You are not
11 answering the question. You are not ready to do the
12 type of work that the Commission will do.

13 The challenge that I have is in the middle
14 population, if I call it that. It's so difficult.
15 It's -- you know, I have to be very careful. Sometimes
16 it takes me maybe 15, 20 minutes to review just one page
17 of the application, just think about it and apply. I
18 understand that there's a learning curve and I will get
19 better in terms of efficiency. But you know, I do
20 appreciate that. It's challenging.

21 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I am so relieved that you
22 said that because I am finding that -- and I'm like, it
23 scares me. The numbers scare me, frankly. And I want
24 to do my best job possible and I am trying and making my
25 best effort. But I am finding that's exactly what's

1 happening with my review and I'm fully concentrating on
2 these and spending all this time, and I'm worried, you
3 know, that I'm not going to get through this.

4 But it takes a lot of effort to really, really
5 dig deep into these responses. Some of them, they are
6 on the border and it's really tough. It's a hard
7 decision.

8 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: So one aspect of our
9 discussion here, and also our work for the next few
10 weeks is that how we can make those decisions as fast as
11 we can. So that's kind of like, you know, again, from
12 my limited experience, I learned that if I want to be
13 efficient, I would rather find those areas that tells me
14 something that makes my decision process very efficient.

15 In other words, if I see a strong statement
16 about -- kind of like, you know, a biased statement, to
17 me, that's not in line with the law and I will read the
18 entire application, of course, but I have already kind
19 of formed my decision in terms of, are they as
20 competitive as the previous one that I read, for
21 example?

22 There may be a statement that suggests strong
23 personal opinions about issues, about politics, without
24 enough explanation of how they consider -- so not only
25 analytical skills but collectively. I think my

1 approach, if I want to be efficient, I think I would be
2 looking at those of -- in those areas that will help me
3 make the decision as fast as I can make it.

4 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Now, Nasir, looking at
5 those areas, what areas are you looking at? And that
6 kind of goes back to the very beginning, when I was
7 saying is what I'm looking at, I'm focusing in on --
8 because we have to definitely streamline this process
9 because we have about 4,300 applications that we have to
10 look at. And what I am focusing in right is those six
11 essay questions, and then that's when I am going in and
12 taking a look at their education and maybe skimming
13 their profession.

14 Is that what you are doing?

15 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Good question. Let me
16 share with you what I am looking at, what I mean by
17 that.

18 I open an application and the first thing we do
19 for this initial review that we are doing right now,
20 trying to narrow down the pool to about 500, 300, or
21 400, whatever that may end up being -- for this initial
22 review, I'm trying to go to the minimum qualifications
23 that's in the law. Do they have analytical skills? Can
24 they be impartial? Do they have appreciation for
25 California's diversity and population, demographics?

1 So I look at the application. That's the first
2 thing that I'm focusing on, to see, did they give me
3 enough information to warrant additional time that I
4 should spend on that application?

5 So if I go to, for example, right on the top --
6 let me answer your question. If I look at, for example,
7 and I see a two-sentence response to analytical skills,
8 that's the one that I would be looking at first, to see,
9 as Kerri used the phrase, that they missed the boat. If
10 that information is not there, if the response to that
11 question, to that requirement, is not sufficient for me
12 to make the decision, then I will glance through the
13 entire application to see, did they state in the
14 interest statement, did they add some information in the
15 activities statement that helps me make that decision?

16 And if I don't see it, I will just rank them or
17 put them in the weak pool, sort of speaking, and move
18 forward. Because when we meet again, we will share our
19 decisions and compile kind of like a spreadsheet maybe.
20 We haven't talked about the logistics yet, but we will
21 be able to see what each one of us decided on each of
22 those applications.

23 And then we can discuss, you know, how -- how
24 consistent we are in our judgments in terms of, you
25 know, how much weight we give to each of those

1 responses. But again, to answer your question, I'm
2 opening the application, looking at areas that will help
3 me make the decision faster. And those are usually --
4 if I have a two-sentence response to the impartiality
5 statement, for example, I will focus on that and see if
6 there's any strong statement about, you know, biases,
7 maybe, or something.

8 Does it help me say -- does it help me decide
9 that this person can be impartial? If the answer is no,
10 I'm not going to spend time -- as much time, is what I
11 mean. And I just move forward. Because there are some
12 in the pool and we can come back and look at them.

13 But for this -- you know, we have 4,000-plus
14 applications, I need to be efficient. So I'm looking
15 for any ways that I can benefit in terms of my speed of
16 reviewing. I certainly cannot spend 10, 15 minutes on
17 each application unless there's something in it that I
18 should look at.

19 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: If they don't meet that -- if
20 they don't meet analytical skills or they don't meet
21 impartiality, they are not going to meet all those
22 qualifications.

23 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Yes. Let's say, for
24 example, you have an individual who are very good with
25 analytical skills but they are not impartial or they --

1 they haven't demonstrated that they can be impartial.
2 To me, that individual is not as competitive as the
3 other one who was able to tell you that, yes, I am
4 impartial by life experiences, education, academics,
5 whatever, that they understand California, they
6 understand California's population. And on top of it,
7 they have analytical skills.

8 So the collective quality has to be there in
9 order for them to be ranked in the higher end of -- you
10 know.

11 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I agree. Especially with
12 impartiality is one of the things that's a critical core
13 requirement. But if they didn't meet that, I may not --
14 they may not make it among the 300 to 500
15 qualifying candidates.

16 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: That's in the law.

17 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: When you are looking at
18 the application, Nasir, you are saying you are looking
19 at the whole application.

20 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I am looking at the whole
21 application, yes.

22 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Because when I'm going in
23 there and looking at the application, I'm looking at
24 just those six essay questions to see if they -- within
25 those six, that they can demonstrate those three

1 qualifications and then I will look at -- if need be, I
2 will go down and take a look at the schooling, and maybe
3 skim the professional. Now, is that what you are doing
4 or you are looking at the whole application?

5 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: No. That's a good start.
6 I'm looking at those essay questions to start with my
7 review.

8 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Okay.

9 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: If I see clearly the
10 abilities or the skills are not there or the person has,
11 for example, a strong opinion about issues or politics
12 without stating that they have the ability to be -- to
13 set it aside, to be independent, if I don't see that,
14 then I just move forward.

15 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Do you ever look at the
16 schooling section and the professions section? Or do
17 you kind of not at this time, since, you know, we do
18 have quite a few applications?

19 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Not necessarily, no. I'm
20 more focused on the individuals' abilities and the
21 skills to do the job.

22 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Within the essay
23 questions.

24 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Within the essay questions.
25 Now, if I go through the essay questions and I

1 say, hmm, this is a very good candidate, then I do look
2 at the other -- you know, there's additional legal
3 requirements that they have to meet -- conflict of
4 interest, for example, is one of them. You know, their
5 family relationships, for example. You know, I do pay
6 attention to all of those other areas, but not in my
7 first review, because, again, in the interest of being
8 efficient, I'm trying to be able to make the decision as
9 fast as I can in terms of if there's a strong statement
10 again -- I know I'm repeating some of these phrases
11 myself.

12 But it's important for us to have a meeting of
13 the minds in terms of, you know, what benefit is it to
14 be efficient? And if we go to the essay questions and
15 we don't see the collective quality, to me, that's not
16 as competitive, and I wouldn't spend time trying to
17 research if the individual has any conflict of interest.
18 Not at least for this round.

19 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: I agree.

20 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: So if a individual has
21 strong skills and abilities to demonstrate that they are
22 able to do the job, I put them in the yes pile and move
23 forward. And when we meet again, when we narrow the
24 pool down to three or five hundred, we can go back to
25 those applications and look more into the details and

1 narrow it down even further later on.

2 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: So right now you are just
3 looking at the essay questions. Is that what you are
4 doing, Kerri?

5 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: To start with.

6 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Yeah. I realize I got to
7 look beyond two, three, and four, obviously. And I
8 didn't know this until I started comparing one to the
9 other and I realized they have an opportunity to put in
10 all these areas, webinars and stuff. So I'm reading all
11 the essays, and that takes time to read the essays. So
12 I'm spending most of my time doing that.

13 Now, you have applicants that provide us
14 one-liners for each one. I will read it, but I will
15 skim it. It takes me two minutes. I'm not going to
16 give them consideration because they didn't make a
17 diligent effort to provide us anything about them that
18 supports these core qualifications.

19 So I have a lot, though, that are coming up, that
20 they have a lot to say in all six areas. And I have an
21 obligation to look at that, I feel like, because that's
22 going to give me a sense of are they going to fit in
23 that 300 to 500?

24 And I realize that as we get down to the 120,
25 we're going to have to look at these closer. But for

1 now, I just want to get through these as best as I can.
2 And I'm getting quicker. I had some time to prepare for
3 the meeting this week so it took time away from my
4 review. But I believe that as I start doing one after
5 another, one after another, I'm getting a sense of what
6 I think is ideal, what I think I should be considering
7 at this point. Maybe not make it to the 60 of the most
8 qualified, but I need to throw them in right now and
9 move on. And so it's getting quicker for me. I have
10 some kind of comfort knowing that we have help.

11 But it's a learning curve. You know, the more
12 you read, the more you get used to how to cycle through
13 these applications that you feel is ideal, what isn't.
14 But that middle ground is hogging up the time for me.
15 And I'm trying to go as quick as I can, but I want to do
16 good effort also. So it will be interesting next
17 meeting, what we come up with. I think we are doing the
18 same thing, it sounds like.

19 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: And what I wanted to do is
20 to make sure that we're looking at the same things,
21 because I'm not even looking right now at any
22 relationships, because I'm just focusing in on those
23 three qualifications, and I want to just make sure that
24 we're looking at the same things. Because letters of
25 recommendations, they were great, almost likely --

1 definitely take a look into those. But I don't know if
2 I'm going to have the time -- 4,400 or 4,300
3 applications to look at everyone's letters of
4 recommendation.

5 But I see that definitely that will be the
6 next -- when we narrow down these applicants, that
7 definitely we are going to be looking at those. But
8 what I am focusing on right now to narrow that pool down
9 is the essay questions. And when you are getting into
10 that middle ground, it's -- I kind of look at the school
11 area and the employment.

12 So is that kind of what you are looking at?

13 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Sometimes I do scan that
14 actually, because there's some benefit in knowing
15 that -- as long as it's not a regurgitation of a spec
16 sheet of what their job duties are. Sometimes a little
17 bit more in there that enhances it and, hmm, that's what
18 they are talking about.

19 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: It sounds like we are on the
21 same page with these qualifications.

22 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: I wanted to go in a little
23 bit more in the sense of the analytical skills that I'm
24 looking for. And because the commissioner is going to
25 have to receive so much information, I wanted to see the

1 applicant show somehow that they are able to receive all
2 this information and look at it and say, what do I need
3 to take a look at and focus in. So basically focus
4 their efforts in on what needs to be looked at. And any
5 superfluous information, be able to push it aside.

6 Also, I'm looking at individuals that can be
7 flexible. Because like what Kerri was saying, when we
8 went and worked with Ms. Mac Donald, she gave us a
9 chance to perform some redistricting and she gave us
10 some scenarios and it was just -- it was like, oh, my
11 gosh. There's all these different criterias that come
12 in that might change these district lines. You have to
13 be flexible. You might have to say, oh, hey, this looks
14 great, but when you look at the statistics or you look
15 at what's going on, and you apply all the legal and all
16 the other criteria within the law, that they have to
17 say, okay, this looks nice but we're going to have to
18 change it and be accepting of that. So I would like to
19 see that.

20 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: It goes back to not only
21 understanding the requirements but also abiding by it
22 and complying to those requirements.

23 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Yes. And then also what I
24 see in individuals is where they embrace having those
25 open meetings, because that's one thing, I think, is

1 very beneficial to the applicant, is to accept that they
2 are going to have to be here just like us, and they are
3 going to have to be open to the public and be very
4 transparent, and they have to be accepting of that and
5 embrace that.

6 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Good point.

7 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Is there any further
8 discussion on this?

9 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: I think we discussed
10 everything that I had in mind.

11 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: It sounds like we pretty much
12 agree in our approach and what we're looking at so far.

13 Is there any public comment?

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I would like to just jump
15 in here one second. We did receive written public
16 comment from the Greenlining Institute, and the
17 secretary will distribute those comments to you now.
18 There's also a pile of them on the back table.

19 In a nutshell, they have suggested the top 120
20 candidates invited to interview with the Applicant
21 Review Panel should be able to show experience in
22 actively working with and engaging and listening to
23 multiethnic communities; demonstrate an understanding of
24 the process and dynamics of redistricting, especially as
25 it relates to voting rights and civic engagement in

1 communities of color; exhibit involvement in statewide
2 networks or coalitions that address issues specific to
3 California's communities of color; highlight concrete
4 consensus building experience; and show experience with
5 bipartisan projects or impartial public bodies.

6 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Thank you.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Sorry to jump in on you.

8 MR. AUSTIN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.
9 My name is Robert Austin [phonetic] and I too am an
10 applicant.

11 In listening to you, one of the things that comes
12 to me of some concern is the work of the panel, of you
13 folks itself. And looking at this thing, Mr. Ahmadi has
14 indicated spending 15 minutes per applicant or per
15 application. You take that 15 minutes times 4,500
16 applicants, and that comes out to a thousand hours. And
17 I'm not sure that everybody here can spend a thousand
18 hours. You don't have enough time, each one of you, to
19 each spend a thousand hours on this thing. So my
20 concern is that as you go through this thing, a fatigue
21 factor begins to set in, and you don't review the last
22 applicants quite as strongly as you review the first
23 ones. So what I am concerned about is the balance of
24 the evaluating process that you folks yourself will
25 take, because I will tell you, you are going to get

1 tired and you start reading these things and you are
2 going to start discarding them. And I'm not sure that
3 the folks at the end of the list are necessarily going
4 to get the same shake as the folks that you first read.

5 That's a concern I have and that's just an
6 open-ended thing.

7 The other question I really have, and I'm trying
8 to find out, is you are talking about a three to five
9 hundred initial group. I haven't heard anybody talk
10 about what that number is going to be, whether it's 300
11 or 500. And when you decide that number, are you going
12 to publish that number? And at what point are financial
13 disclosure reports going to be required of the
14 applicants?

15 Thank you very much.

16 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Thank you.

17 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Let me just answer to your
18 comment about my statement. Just to clarify, what I
19 meant by 15 minutes or 20 minutes, that was just an
20 example for the amount of time that I have spent on some
21 of the applications that require that much time.

22 As I mentioned, my review will be based on the
23 time that it takes for me to review an application
24 based on the quality of the response. In other words,
25 if I see a response that's so clear to me that this

1 person or this individual is not able to do the job, I
2 will stop and not spend time on it. I do appreciate
3 your understanding of the challenge that we are facing.
4 We have, like, 4,000 plus applications. And I will do
5 my best to be awake when I review the applications. I
6 spent a lot of time last week, about close to 70 hours,
7 and it was a learning process for me. So I hope that as
8 we get through this process, we will get better. I
9 certainly think that there's a learning curve in there,
10 but we will get better.

11 Thanks.

12 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Also, in the sense of
13 reviewing these applicants, we do have staff and they
14 are providing recommendations to us and they are
15 summarizing what they are reading, so we're able to do
16 that and that kind of helps us out a lot.

17 In the sense of narrowing down the three to five
18 hundred, it's not going to be a set number that we're
19 going to be providing. What we're going to do is, we're
20 hoping to narrow down this pool to a manageable amount
21 where we can start really focusing -- focus in on
22 particular attributes. So what we might do is find
23 individuals that -- 400 individuals that we think are
24 400 of the most qualified applicants, or 450 or 350.
25 We're just trying to narrow it down, so there's not

1 going to be a specific number that we're going to be
2 able to provide you until we get to that meeting and
3 start discussing.

4 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: And we don't know what that
5 number may be.

6 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: No. We could have -- we
7 haven't even hit a thousand yet, so we could have a
8 thousand that we like. I don't know. But I think we
9 got to plug away and see what it's going to end up after
10 we do the initial review. If it requires that we got
11 too much of a pool here, we're going to further reduce
12 that and we're going to need more help. We're going to
13 get it done. I have no doubt. But we have no idea. We
14 can't represent to you any concrete numbers.

15 It's -- like you said, it takes some applicants
16 for me to review maybe 15 minutes, but not all of them
17 are like that. I can't tell you what my average is.
18 Some of them take two minutes. And so I do get fatigued
19 when I read these applications, but I do take my breaks.
20 I wore my glasses because I can't get my contacts in
21 because my eyes are so dry. I'm on my third latte now.

22 But it's one of those things. I'm going to do
23 what it takes. I'm trying to maintain my wellness
24 program so I can be alert in all respects to get this
25 done and do a quality job.

1 And my panel members are doing the same. I do
2 take breaks a lot. I stretch out. I am alert when I do
3 this. I'm not falling asleep at my computer as I'm
4 scrolling through the application. But you do get
5 eyestrain, I have to admit. But we're doing what it
6 takes to get it done. I want to assure the public that
7 we will get it done.

8 So it's tough work. It's quite a challenge. So
9 people have a lot of great things to say, so got to take
10 time to review it.

11 PANEL MEMBER CAMACHO: Did you want to comment
12 about the Form 700?

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Sure. I think that you
14 can't decide when you are going to ask for the Form 700
15 right now. It depends on how long it takes you to make
16 the cut. Applicants have 30 days to get their Form 700
17 in. We want those before we identify the 120 who are
18 going to be invited to sit for interview. So we will
19 have to back out as we go through the process.

20 We're hoping that it's a small group of people.
21 But once we identify the most qualified applicants, at
22 that point, really, any one of the most qualified --
23 whether there are 300, 500, or 750 -- any one of those
24 people is likely to be invited to sit for an interview
25 and may be asked to submit the Form 700.

1 MR. AUSTIN: Before or after the interview?

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Before. In order to
3 identify the 120 that we want to interview, we need to
4 know what your financial interests are. And they will
5 come off the website if you are eliminated from the
6 pool.

7 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Is there any other further
8 public comment?

9 Please state your name for the record.

10 MR. BERNEBERG: Good morning. My name is
11 Steven A. Berneberg. While I'm not a rocket scientist
12 or a mathematician, I am an engineer. In my profession,
13 source data is the foundation of which we make all our
14 decisions. If there's a commissioner, I hope you have
15 at least one commissioner that will be able to go in and
16 look at and evaluate your source data. Much of this
17 data is skewed, depending on how it's sampled. And
18 sampling techniques should be a qualification or an
19 attribute of at least one of the commissioners, because
20 we don't trust our data as an engineer. If we do,
21 possibility of airplanes falling out of the sky, cars
22 crashing, something very bad is happening. So I
23 certainly hope someone is going to look at the source
24 data and make an evaluation of that source data.

25 Thanks.

1 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Thank you for your comment.
2 Any further comment from the public?
3 State your name for the record, please.
4 MS. EDSON-SMITH: Margaret Edson-Smith.
5 I wanted to get back to something that
6 Ms. Camacho said at the beginning, that you were talking
7 about the initial duties of the Commission and you were
8 talking about how you wanted somebody who could hire
9 employees and that had that kind of experience.
10 And really, my concern is, you are going to have
11 to be looking at people who can wear two kinds of hats,
12 somebody who knows how to go out and hire, organize,
13 direct, a professional kind of experience. And at the
14 same time, all 14 of these people are going to be
15 working in a peer group of 14 people who are all doing
16 the same kind of tasks, and you also want to look for
17 somebody who can be a worker bee and who can actually
18 get work done.
19 And I think you are going to find your candidates
20 tend to fall into one camp or the other camp. And I
21 guess you would like to be sensitive to trying to find
22 people who can both be a boss, a professional, a hiring
23 person, but can also sit down at the computer and go
24 through a lot of data and hold meetings and share
25 information.

1 So just kind of a thought, a suggestion, because
2 you are looking at some very nebulous qualities here,
3 that I think are going to be hard to get your hands
4 around.

5 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Thank you.

6 Is there any further comment?

7 I guess we're proposing the end of the meeting,
8 and we're now in a period where we can move forward to
9 general comment. Is there any members of the public
10 that would like to comment on a particular area of the
11 process or non-agenda items?

12 MS. MATTHEWS: Joan Matthews, Tracy.

13 I was just wondering, we don't want to reinvent
14 the wheel, although I know we're entering into
15 unexplored territory. Will we have some sort of
16 a -- will the Commission, I should say, have some sort
17 of an outline of how judge panels and/or state
18 legislators or equal groups have handled these kinds of
19 situations? Because, obviously, lines have been drawn
20 in the past, but never by an independent citizens
21 committee.

22 So how that was approached from the legislative
23 point of view, or how it was approached from a judicial
24 point of view, depending on the group, were there
25 differences, and will we be able to find that out?

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So we have to be really
2 careful here for our Bagley-Keene. The panel is
3 prohibited under the law from actually discussing things
4 that weren't agendaized, so they have to be careful in
5 answering questions. But I will answer your question
6 since I am not a panel member.

7 Bear in mind that one of your first tasks, as the
8 panel has sort of alluded to, is hiring an executive
9 director, and you will have staff who will assist you.
10 We assume, with the Bureau's support, as well as the
11 support of the Secretary of State's Office, as you
12 transition into these first 30 days or so, you will get
13 an executive director who hopefully understands your
14 desire to grasp how this has been done in the past and
15 will gather that information for you. That is our
16 assumption as to how it will work.

17 Obviously, the Commission is free to make those
18 decisions on its own. We don't have the authority to
19 tell it how to do its job.

20 MS. MATTHEWS: But we might have models that we
21 can look at?

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I think you would be wise
23 to ask your executive director or the Secretary of State
24 or the Bureau, whoever is responsible for helping you at
25 that given time, to gather some information that can

1 help you understand how it's been done before.

2 MS. MATTHEWS: Thank you.

3 PANEL MEMBER AHMADI: Thank you.

4 MS. PATAKI: Elizabeth Pataki [phonetic],
5 Sacramento. I don't think the panel can comment on
6 this. Perhaps you could.

7 As you know, this is a movement coming in from
8 out of state to try to take redistricting and put it
9 back in the Legislature. I would assume we're just
10 going to -- you are going to go ahead and -- as if that
11 was not going to be passed. I wonder if you might
12 comment on that.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Correct. We are required
14 to abide by the law as it stands today. If it changes
15 tomorrow, we will change our direction. But unless and
16 until that change takes place, we are proceeding.

17 CHAIRPERSON SPANO: Is there any further comment
18 public?

19 Seeing that there's no further comment, is there
20 any further business?

21 There being no further business, the meeting is
22 adjourned.

23 (Rap gavel)

24 (The meeting concluded at 11:19 a.m.)

25 ---o0o---

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, KATHRYN S. SWANK, a Certified Shorthand Reporter
of the State of California, do hereby certify:

That I am a disinterested person herein; that the
foregoing Citizens Redistricting Commission Applicant
Review Panel Public Meeting was reported in shorthand by
me, Kathryn S. Swank, a Certified Shorthand Reporter of
the State of California, and thereafter transcribed into
typewriting.

I further certify that I am not of counsel or
attorney for any of the parties to said meeting nor in
any way interested in the outcome of said meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
1st day of May 2010.

KATHRYN S. SWANK, CSR

Certified Shorthand Reporter

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